



Special points of interest:

- Administrative Report!
- Meet your fellow Middle Eastern Commissioner
- Maryland Green Jobs
- International Trade Mission Information
- Local Events across the State and DC-Metro Area

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Keeping up with the Middle Eastern Commission

March 2011

Message from the Commission



The 2011 Legislation Session began earlier this year and officials are working hard to address important issues including, the budget, education, and public safety.

The Commission is charged with reviewing State and Local legislation and keeping track of bills which would effect our community. For more information on 2011 Legislative Session, visit the Maryland General Assembly's website at:

www.mlis.state.md.us.

As an effort to keep our community informed on the changes occurring in Annapolis, the Commission will be working to keep their website updated with important Session information.

Outside of Session, the Commission is looking forward to a new year of initiatives. Some of our top priorities include: developing an advisory board for Maryland's Friendship Agreement with Baghdad, addressing health concerns in our Community, organizing a Community summit, and following up on the Census 2010 demographics.

Our next Commission meeting will be on March 31 starting at

6:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the Banneker-Douglass Museum on 84 Franklin Street, Annapolis, MD 21401.

For more information about the meeting, visit our website: www.middleeastern.maryland.gov Or contact the Administrator at MidEast@goci.state.md.us or 410-767-7925.



More Good News for Maryland's Public Universities



Two University System of Maryland (USM) institutions are among the 50 public institutions in the United States that The Princeton Review has recognized on its 2011 "Best Value Colleges" list. The University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) earned the distinction for offering a combination of

academic excellence and affordability.

The Princeton Review praised UMCP for its living learning communities, Honors College, comprehensive aid program, and low tuition costs. The publication recognized UMBC for its recruitment of serious students and support of those students through undergraduate research opportunities on campus, in the Baltimore-Washington corridor and beyond with government agencies, non-profits, and private-sector companies.

National publications have routinely praised both institu-

tions for offering educational excellence and affordability to students and their families. Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine included both universities on its 2010 Best Value Public Colleges list and ranked UMCP No. 8 overall, a jump of 20 rankings positions from two years earlier. For the second straight year, U.S. News & World Report's Best Colleges Guide named UMBC the country's No. 1 "Up-and-Coming" National University. For details about the 2011 recognitions in The Princeton Review, visit: www.princetonreview.com

"Judge O'Malley serves as a seminar leader to help facilitate discussions and share knowledge on best practices..."

Administrative Report

As we start 2011, the Commission hopes to continue working and strengthening the Middle Eastern American population in Maryland. We have worked to bring you these monthly newsletters along with a monthly update on state job vacancies. This year, we are aiming to expand our reach and be able to host a summit to better understand the needs of our com-

munities.

The goal of this summit is to bring together state representatives, community leaders, Commissioners and the general public to discuss major concerns within our community and how to work together to alleviate any issues.

Currently, the Commission plans to focus on the 2011

Legislative Session. As the Maryland General Assembly has been updating their legislation, the Commission will follow Annapolis and create a legislative agenda with bills which are of interest to our community. To better keep our community informed, the Commission will keep all updates posted on our website.

Read Across Maryland

March is "Read Across Maryland Month." Every year, the O'Malley-Brown Administration and the Maryland State Educators Association (MSEA) join together to encourage elected officials, members of the Administration's Executive Cabinet and their staff, and families across the state to participate by reading to children during special events and programs in

classrooms, museums, restaurants, libraries, shopping centers and malls.

For the second straight year, the program includes a partnership with the Maryland Library Association, with a theme of "30 for 30," a challenge to parents, teachers, and students to read 30 minutes every day for 30 days for the month of

March.

The Administration is encouraging families to read and learn not just for the month of March, but all year long.

For more information on Read Across Maryland, visit www.readacrossmaryland.org.

First Lady Judge Katie O'Malley Participates in National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence



First Lady Judge Katie O'Malley joined judges and experts from across the nation to participate in the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence (NJIDV) "Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases" workshop in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The workshop, a judicial education program, is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, and the Na-

tional Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Judge O'Malley serves as a seminar leader to help facilitate discussions and share knowledge on best practices for domestic violence-related cases.

Founded in 1998, the NJIDV brings together various professionals and experts including judges, attorneys, advocates, academics, mental health experts, social scientists, child experts, elder abuse experts, and community leaders to create programs for the judiciary. The Institute works to enhance knowledge and skills of trial court judges and judicial officers. The workshop settings are based on peer-to-peer learning models that involve all partici-

pants equally and actively.

The First Lady has been a steadfast advocate for the rights of victims of domestic violence. For years, she has served in the fight to end domestic violence, participating in several House of Ruth functions and giving lectures both in Maryland and overseas. In March 2009, Judge O'Malley spoke in Washington, DC as a guest of the U.S. State Department on women's rights in America and domestic violence. The following May, she traveled to St. Petersburg, Russia to speak to students of Leningrad State University on the effects of domestic violence on women internationally.

SPOTLIGHT: Meet your Middle Eastern American Commissioner, Hoossam Malek

Established in October of 2007, the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs began serving the community at the highest executive level.

The Governor's Office was selective in their appointment process to ensure demographic, gender, and country of origin diversity. The Commission represents nine different Middle Eastern countries. Specifically there are Commissioners from Palestine, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Egypt and Jordan.

Mr. Hoossam Malek was appointed to the Commission to represent the Syrian community in Maryland. Mr. Malek received his undergraduate education from Princeton University in Economics. He later obtained his M.A in Middle Eastern Studies and his MBA with Honors from the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business.

After college Mr. Malek participated in the AmeriCorps VISTA program under the Central Maryland Chapter of the American Red Cross. He helped develop a fire prevention initiative for Baltimore City residences which received attention from the National Red Cross. His fire prevention and outreach work in West Baltimore City also earned him and another AmeriCorps colleague a Mayor's Citation in 2002.

Following his service as a VISTA Mr. Malek returned to his training in economics and joined the

research department of the Richmond Federal Reserve Bank as a Research Associate. His main accomplishments included working closely with the Bank President on a publication for the Carnegie-Rochester Conference on Public Policy as well as co-authoring *Bank Risk of Failure and the Too-Big-to-Fail Policy* with a Senior Economist.

Mr. Malek now works in Emerging Market finance, responsible for covering the high yield debt markets of the Middle East and Africa for BCP Securities, LLC. His research on the relative creditworthiness of MENA & African companies and the associated trade recommendations are published in widely

disseminated sell-side research. The analysis helps develop the nascent markets between buyers and sellers of illiquid and distressed bonds from the MENA and Africa regions.

With his diverse knowledge of business and international finance, Hoossam Malek serves on the Commission's Business Development Committee. Mr. Malek already presented to the Governor's International Advisory Board on how to best position MD to benefit from economic growth in MENA. The presentation resulted in the networking of area businesses with potential partners abroad.



Picture Left: Commissioner Hoossam Malek at the 2010 Joint Commissions Assembly

Pictures Below: Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs



"With his enthusiasm and expertise the Commission will continue to work towards researching and presenting potential business opportunities..."

**"Once Again,
all three bond
rating
agencies have
reaffirmed
Maryland's
fiscal strength,
even during
difficult
times."**

Dozens of "Green Jobs" Open in Maryland

The "green" movement is still chugging along and local employers are looking to fill a myriad of job openings green industries.

Dozens of "green" jobs can be found at the Green Building Institute's job board. The site links to a national job board where a search engine allows you to pare down the openings by location. Among the categories listed on the Green Building Institute's job board are: renewable energy, U.S. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, solar, water

conservation and wind power jobs.

Recent job postings include:

Senior federal project engineer for Constellation Energy Group in Baltimore. The job entails conducting energy audits and preparing written proposals for potential energy conservation upgrades, including detailed analyses of costs and savings.

Senior electrical engineer for Parsons Corp. in Annapolis Junction. Parsons is looking for someone to design modifica-

tions to electrical systems and components for data centers and mission critical facilities for an agency within the U.S. Department of Defense. LEED certification is preferred.

Junior energy consultant for MCFA Planning in Baltimore. The job's responsibilities include achieving utility cost savings through support of facility repair and construction activities.

For more information, visit: www.greenbuildinginstitute.org

Maryland Retains Triple A Bond Rating

On February 23, Governor Martin O'Malley issued the following statement regarding Maryland retention of its Triple A bond rating by all three bond rating agencies:

"Once again, all three bond rating agencies have reaffirmed Maryland's fiscal strength, even during difficult times. Because of the tough choices we've made together to create and save jobs and to practice fiscal responsibility, we are able to remain one of only eight states to retain the highest possible Triple A bond rating."

"I want to thank Treasurer Kopp and Comptroller Franchot

for their leadership and management of our State's finances. As Maryland transitions into the new economy, and as we work together to balance our budget challenges for next year, it is our hope that we will continue to protect this seal of fiscal responsibility and maintain a strong commitment to improving conditions for Maryland businesses, creating jobs and fueling our economic progress."

"I feel confident that working with the General Assembly, we can strengthen the funding of our pension system on behalf of our state employees and retirees."

Maryland remains one of only eight states to maintain the highest possible Triple A bond rating. In affirming the rating, Standard & Poor's noted "Maryland's economic strength and historically strong financial and debt management policies." Fitch noted that "the state's economy is returning to growth after a recession" and Moody's mentions that the rating "reflects Maryland's strong financial management policies, stable economy with high personal income levels, and ability to maintain positive available reserves despite sustained pressure on its budget."

Maryland Participates in International Paris Air Show; Jordan/Israel Trade Mission

Marylanders will join the Department of Business and Economic Development June 20-26, 2011 at the International Paris Air Show, the largest aviation and space industry event of the year with over 2,000 exhibitors, 138,000 trade visitors and 200 official delega-

tions. The State will have a booth along with other Maryland companies.

Along with this event, Maryland participated in a trade mission to Jordan and Israel from February 20th to the 24th. The mission was led by the U.S.

Department of Commerce and their executives.



Governor O'Malley and U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Celebrate Completion of ICC's First Segment

On February 21, Governor Martin O'Malley and U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood drove the ceremonial "first car" on Maryland's Intercounty Connector (ICC)/MD 200 and cut a ribbon to celebrate the completion of the first segment of Maryland's first all-electronic toll road.

The ICC/MD 200 is an east-west highway connecting Montgomery and Prince George's counties that have been in the making for more than half a century. The first segment of the ICC opened the morning of February 23 and connects I-270/I-370 at Shady Grove and MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) in Rockville/Olney.

"After 5 – years of planning, opening the ICC means not only progress, but opportunity because the ICC connects two of the State's premier economic corridors along I-270 and I-95," said Governor O'Malley.

"For Maryland residents, the ICC is more than just a commuting option. It gives Marylanders the freedom to connect with our communities, our jobs, valuable transit options and safer local roads. But above all, the ICC will give Marylanders back time they can enjoy with their families."

Citizens are expected to gain immediate benefits and time savings by using the first ICC segment. In fact, it is projected that trip times can be reduced by up to 70 percent. On the existing local road network, traveling from Shady Grove Metro Station to Georgia Avenue takes about 22 minutes. On this first section of the ICC, that same trip should take about 7 minutes.

"The new Intercounty Connector will promote business and employment opportunities in Maryland by improving the mobility of goods and people," said Secretary LaHood. "It is a terrific example of how a targeted transportation investment can help build for the future and strengthen America's economic competitiveness."

An economic catalyst, the \$2.56 billion ICC is supporting 4,500 jobs involving more than 200 contractors in its construction alone with \$330 million of its construction dollars designated for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise. An independent study by the University of Maryland projects that the ICC, when fully open, will support the development of about 14,000 jobs in Prince George's and Montgomery counties. The study also found the ICC will save Maryland drivers and businesses an estimated \$6.7 billion over the next 20 years in time, fuel and wear-and-tear on vehicles.

"The opening of the ICC is another historic achievement that physically links the State's two largest counties," said Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III. "The ICC will help enhance the range of transportation options for our residents and fosters a bold new direction in inter-county cooperation and collaboration in transportation policy."

The ICC is the "greenest" highway in Maryland's history, and one of the "greenest" ever built in the nation. More than 15 percent of the project's budget - \$370 million - is devoted to mitigating environmental impacts. Going beyond federal mitigation requirements, the

ICC has led to stream restoration, hundreds of acres of new wetlands and forest habitat, longer bridges over sensitive streams, innovative storm-water improvements, state-of-the-art construction techniques to limit the road's footprint and 26 wildlife passages. All-electronic tolling on the ICC helps to maintain free-flowing traffic conditions and improve air quality by eliminating stop-and-go traffic at toll plazas.

Drivers can enter and exit the ICC: at I-370/Shady Grove/Metro Access Road, at MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) and (until the ICC opens to I-95) at a temporary intersection at MD 28 (Norbeck Road).

The ICC is a variably priced toll facility in order to manage congestion and deliver reliable travel times. Motorists can "test drive" the ICC at no charge through March 6. Beginning Monday, March 7, drivers of passenger vehicles and light trucks will pay rates.

ICC tolls are collected electronically at highway speeds using E-ZPass®. There will be no toll booths or cash toll collection on the ICC. Traveling the ICC without a valid E-ZPass will result in a "Notice of Toll Due" being sent to the registered owner of the vehicle for the cost of the toll. Effective April 6, the notice will include a \$3 service charge per one-way trip.

Beginning March 1, two new Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) commuter bus routes begin express service via the ICC. Route 201 provides daily service with seven stops between the Gaithersburg Park & Ride and BWI Marshall Airport, and Route 202 provides week-day peak service with six stops

between the Gaithersburg Park & Ride and NSA/Fort Meade. These express bus routes also will provide connections from the Metro Red Line to the MARC Camden and Penn Lines without traveling into the heart of Washington, D.C. From March 1 through March 14, the service will be offered for free to acquaint customers with this transportation option. For more information, visit www.mtaiccbus.com.

When the entire ICC is open to traffic, MTA will add three additional bus routes that will include service from Columbia to Bethesda, Urbana to College Park, and Greenbelt Metro to Germantown Transit Center. These additional routes will provide commuters with a convenient link to reach Metro's Red and Green Lines and all three MARC Lines – Brunswick, Camden and Penn.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) is managing ICC construction, and the MDTA helped finance, owns, operates and maintains the ICC. The next segment of the ICC, under construction between Georgia Avenue and I-95 near Laurel, is scheduled to be complete in late 2011/early 2012.

For more on ICC operations, visit www.mdtamaryland.gov. To sign up for E-ZPass, visit www.ezpassmd.com.

For more details on the ICC construction project or \$370 million environmental program, visit www.iccproject.com.



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**"Serving the Middle Eastern
American community through out the
State at the highest executive level."**



On October 11, 2007, Governor Martin O'Malley signed the Executive Order to create the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs. The Commission was created to address the need for State agencies to respond effectively to the needs and concerns of Maryland citizens with ancestral heritage in Middle Eastern countries.

The Commission was appointed by the Governor and his administration in order to address the issues facing the Middle Eastern American community at the highest level of the Executive Branch of Maryland State Government.

We're on the web!
www.middleeastern.maryland.gov

Events Around Maryland and the Metro Area

March 10
10th Annual Economic Outlook 2011
Carroll Community College
For more information, call:
410-386-2070

March 12
Pan American Symphony Orchestra - Marcel Khalifé
George Washington University, Washington, DC
For information, visit:
www.panamsymphony.org

March 12
Shoufou Alwawa Wayn
1215 U Street, NW, Washington, DC from 8pm–10:30pm
For information, visit:
www.imhussein.com

March 13
International Sisters Network Fashion Show and Lunch
1454 Parsons Ave, 20374
For more information, call:
240-6066122

March 23
ATFL Gala Awards Night
2401 M St, NW, Washington, DC from 7:00pm
For information, call:
202-223-9333

March 31
Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs Meeting
84 Franklin Street, Annapolis
6:00pm to 9:00pm
For more information, call :
410-767-7925



If you would like to submit an announcement to post, please email it to: MidEast@goci.state.md.us. Every announcement must contain a date, title, location, time, phone number or website. We reserve the right to edit or delete any submissions.